

THE SACRAMENTALITY OF EPISCOPAL CONSECRATION

SUSAN WOOD, S.C.L.

Saint Mary College, Leavenworth, Kan.

THE TEACHING of *Lumen gentium* that episcopal consecration constitutes the fulness of sacramental ordination to office raises new questions about the sacramental signification of episcopal consecration.¹ Before Vatican II the status of the episcopacy as an order remained a disputed question in the Western Church, with the result that the point of reference for discussions on ordained ministry was most frequently the priesthood.² Now, in the light of contemporary sacramental theology, we must ask how and in what the episcopacy represents a fulness above and beyond that of the presbyterate.³ More importantly, how is this sacrament a sacrament of the Church, that is, how is the nature of the

¹ Karl Rahner, "The Hierarchical Structure of the Church, with Special Reference to the Episcopate," *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II* 1 (New York: Herder and Herder, 1967) 193. See also J. Lécuyer, "Orientations présentes de la théologie de l'épiscopat," in Y. Congar and B. D. Dupuy, eds., *L'Épiscopat et l'église universelle* (Paris: Cerf, 1962) 781-811. G. Nicolussi summarizes the doctrinal evolution of Vatican II's statement on the sacramentality of episcopal consecration through the 1962, 1963, and 1964 texts in "La sacramentalità dell'episcopato nella 'Lumen gentium,' Cap. III," *Ephemerides theologicae Lovanienses* 47 (1971) 7-63. His footnotes indicate the preconiliar literature on the subject.

² George Dolan notes that "for St. Thomas the words 'character,' 'ordo,' and 'sacramentum' were all interchangeable, and where one was missing the other two were necessarily absent. It was for this reason that he could not consider episcopal consecration as a distinct sacrament, although he recognized that in this ceremony an additional power was conferred upon the bishop-elect, a power that he did not have as a simple priest The episcopate is not a sacrament because it is not an order; and it is not an order because it does not impress a character; and it does not impress a character because 'through it the bishop is not ordained directly to God, but to the Mystical Body of Christ' (*Comment. in Sententias*, IV, d. 24, q. 3. a. 2; *Summa Theologica*, Suppl. q. 40, a. 5, ad 2)" (*The Distinction between the Episcopate and the Presbyterate according to the Thomistic Opinion* [Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1950] 82-83). For additional history see Seamus Ryan, "Episcopal Consecration: The Legacy of the Schoolmen," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 33 (1966) 3-38.

³ This question is asked with the awareness that the terms "bishop" and "presbyter" were synonymous in the early Church and were sometimes interchangeably applied to the same individuals. See Raymond Brown, "*Episkopē* and *Episkopos*: The New Testament Evidence," *TS* 41 (1980) 322-38. The present point of departure is the contemporary division of ordained ministry as we know it and the contemporary understanding of the ecclesial dimension within sacramental theology.

Church sacramentalized or manifested within episcopal ordination?

A re-examination of the ecclesial signification of the episcopacy is also necessary in order that the function of the episcopacy may be more clearly understood within a "communion of communions" model of church unity. In Roman Catholicism the theology of the particular church, the fundamental ecclesial unit, rests heavily upon the episcopacy, wherein the bishop functions as the representative of the local church and focus of ecclesial unity. This communion among particular churches is objectified—one might also say sacramentalized—in the college of bishops. For progress in ecumenical discussion, further study is needed to clarify why and how the communion of particular churches, that interconnection between Eucharistic communities, is sacramentalized through ministry when the Eucharist is itself a sacrament of unity.

The present examination of the ecclesial signification of the episcopacy responds to the mandate of the World Council of Churches' document, *Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry*, the "Lima Document," which asks all churches maintaining the threefold pattern of ministry to examine how its potential can be fully developed for the most effective witness of the Church in this world. The Lima Document recognizes the threefold ministry of bishop, presbyter, and deacon, and notes the necessity of the *episkopē* to safeguard the unity of the body.⁴ We will show that the sacramental signification of the episcopacy is directly related to this unity.

INADEQUATE DISTINGUISHING CRITERIA

Two criteria sometimes used to distinguish the episcopacy from the presbyterate, configuration to Christ and sacramental power, remain ultimately inadequate in and of themselves to determine either the essence or the uniqueness of the episcopacy. According to these views, the sacramental effect of ordination is commonly identified with the ordinand's configuration to Christ, which empowers the ordinand to teach, to govern, and to act in Christ's name in the administration of the sacraments. The episcopacy is then distinguished from the presbyterate in the powers proper to each "degree" of ordination. This equates fulness of orders with fulness of powers. Not the least problem associated with this view has been the difficulty in distinguishing the priesthood of the faithful and their configuration to Christ in baptism from that of the ordained minister.

According to the first view, both priest and bishop signify "Christ." The ordained person is *vicarius Christi*, a vicar of Christ who acts *in*

⁴ *Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry* (Faith and Order Paper No. 111; Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1982).

persona Christi, in the place of the person of Christ.⁵ This view remains prominent in Vatican II's teaching that "through that sacrament priests by the anointing of the Holy Spirit are signed with a special character and so are configured to Christ the priest in such a way that they are able to act in the person of Christ the head" (PO 2). In this view of the sacrament, the ordained person is "ordered" to Christ. This view has important ramifications for the other sacraments, since it is Christ who acts in the sacraments, as in the forgiveness of sin and in the consecration of the Eucharist.

Within this interpretation the sacrament of order is a sacrament essentially *for* the Church rather than a sacrament *of* the Church. In other words, it itself is not a sign of the Church by which the Church is made manifest. This lack of appreciation for the ecclesial dimension of the sacrament of order was the precise reason why St. Thomas did not consider episcopal consecration to be a sacrament: he did not see how episcopal consecration empowered the bishop to consecrate more intensively the body and blood of Christ.⁶ Even though the fulness of the sacrament of order conferred by episcopal consecration is called the "high priesthood" (LG 21), configuration to Christ does not distinguish the episcopacy from the presbyterate. We therefore have to look elsewhere to discover in what sense episcopal consecration is sacramental and contains a fulness beyond that of the presbyterate.

A second response locates the distinction between the order of the episcopacy and the priesthood in sacramental powers proper to each. To say that a bishop can ordain and confirm while a priest cannot does not take into account an evolving sacramental theology. In the revised rite of confirmation, e.g., the bishop is now called the "original" rather than the "ordinary" minister of the sacrament, and it is now common practice for him to delegate this power to a parish pastor in certain circumstances. Karl Rahner has stated that "no truly definable borderline can be clearly and convincingly drawn between priest and bishop which is *absolute* as regards the power of order."⁷ Documentation suggests that, dogmatically speaking, the valid ordination of a priest by another simple priest under certain conditions does not appear impossible.⁸ The most theologically certain distinction in power is that a priest cannot ordain a bishop. We

⁵ For a history of the terms *in persona Christi* and *in persona ecclesiae*, see B.-D. Marliangeas, *Clés pour une théologie du ministère* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1978).

⁶ Dolan, *Distinction* 85.

⁷ "The Area Bishop: Some Theological Reflections," *Theological Investigations* 17 (New York: Crossroad, 1981) 166.

⁸ *Ibid.* 161. For the data and history of the question, see P. Fransen, "Ordo," in *LTK* 7, 1212-20, esp. 1215-17; also Seamus Ryan, "Vatican II: Re-Discovery of the Episcopate," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 33 (1966) 211-17.

conclude, therefore, that the sign of episcopal consecration does not lie exclusively in the power it confers, even if by virtue of office the bishop is the primary minister of confirmation and orders.

ECCLESIAL DIMENSION OF SACRAMENT

Contemporary sacramental theology identifies Christ as the fundamental sacrament, the Church as the sacrament of Christ, and seven sacraments as sacraments or signs of the Church.⁹ That which is signified by a sacrament is made present in the "real symbol," which contains what it signifies.¹⁰ Consequently the *res et sacramentum* of the sacrament contains an ecclesial dimension as part of that which is signified by the sacrament. The sacrament of order proclaims, realizes, celebrates, and signifies a reality beyond itself, and this reality includes the Church.¹¹ The ecclesial signification of episcopal consecration is what ultimately distinguishes it from the presbyterate.

Karl Rahner addresses this dimension by asserting that the fundamental offices in the Church are the most indispensable constituents of the Church since "she only exists by possessing and transmitting the functions given her by Christ, and the powers bound up with and serving them."¹² According to this argument, the Church is present within the sacrament of order because it cannot exist apart from the sacrament, and the Church acts through the power of the sacrament. This argument does not tell us, however, what is revealed to us in the sign of the sacrament of order about the nature of the Church. If we were to answer that it reveals that the Church nourishes, forgives, strengthens—those actions performed through ministry—one could respond that those aspects of the Church are revealed respectively in the sacraments of Eucharist, penance, and confirmation, and we still would not have discovered what is unique and specific to the sacrament of order. To answer that the sacrament of order reveals the teaching and governing authority of the Church does not in and of itself indicate the ecclesial basis of that authority. Although Rahner comments in a later essay that

⁹ Esp. Karl Rahner, *The Church and the Sacraments* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1936), but also Otto Semmelroth, *Church and Sacrament* (Notre Dame: Fides, 1965). William Van Roo criticizes Rahner's position for not giving sufficient attention to the Christological basis of the sacraments: "Reflections on Karl Rahner's 'Kirche und Sakramente,'" *Gregorianum* 44 (1963) 493-98.

¹⁰ Karl Rahner, "The Theology of the Symbol," *Theological Investigations* 4 (New York: Crossroad, 1966) 221-52.

¹¹ For an earlier attempt to identify the ecclesial dimension of episcopal consecration, see Seamus Ryan, "Episcopal Consecration: Fullness of Order," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 32 (1965) 295-324.

¹² *The Church and the Sacraments* 97.

the nature of the directive functions of the Church at the social level is determined by the nature of the Church herself, he does not develop what this nature is.¹³ We conclude, therefore, that even though Rahner has significantly contributed to contemporary sacramental theology by identifying sacraments as ecclesial signs, he has not adequately shown how the Church is signified in the sacrament of order.

Edward Kilmartin identifies the ecclesial signification of apostolic office with the faith of the ecclesial community.¹⁴ He traces the traditional view of apostolic office, according to which church leaders are empowered to act in the place of Christ, and criticizes the view that one can explain the representative role of the priest in relation to Christ in isolation from his representative role with respect to the Church as Body of Christ. Basing his position on the necessity of faith for a sacramental event, he argues that office directly represents the faith of the Church and only to this extent can represent Christ.

Kilmartin's inquiry is not our own, for he was reflecting on the "implicit, largely unreflective acceptance of the view that Christ somehow binds his presence to institutions which operate independently of the faith of the Church."¹⁵ Nevertheless, his insight into the necessary link between the office's representation of Christ with its representation of the Church as the Body of Christ serves our own inquiry, even if his conclusion does not. To say that the apostolic office represents the faith of the Church still does not identify in what respect it represents the nature of the Church. To argue from the necessity of faith to its signification in the episcopal college does not explain how a collegial structure is intrinsic to faith. Nor does it explain how the fulness of the episcopacy exceeds that of the priesthood.

LITURGICAL EVIDENCE

Following the tradition of *lex orandi, lex credendi*, the principle that the Church believes as it prays, an important source for determining the distinguishing characteristic of episcopal consecration as well as its ecclesial signification is the rite of ordination of a bishop.¹⁶ The rite

¹³ Karl Rahner, "Theological Reflections on the Priestly Image of Today and Tomorrow," *Theological Investigations* 12 (New York: Seabury, 1974) 45.

¹⁴ "Apostolic Office: Sacrament of Christ," *TS* 36 (1975) 243-64. Kilmartin does not distinguish between the representative function of priests and bishops, even from an ecclesial perspective. So, too, Michael Lawler in *Symbol and Sacrament: A Contemporary Sacramental Theology* (New York: Paulist 1987) 237-45; and Bernard Cooke, "Fullness of Orders': Theological Reflections," in *Official Ministry in a New Age*, ed. James H. Provost (Washington, D.C.: Canon Law Society of America, 1981) 151-67.

¹⁵ Kilmartin, "Apostolic Office" 256.

¹⁶ *The Rites of the Catholic Church as Revised by the Second Ecumenical Council 2* (New York: Pueblo, 1980) 89-100.

points to the close relationship between ordination and the ecclesial community, because ordinations always take place in the context of a Eucharistic celebration and a bishop is ordained for a concrete Eucharistic community, even if in our own time this is not absolutely true in the case of titular bishops.¹⁷

The ordination rite emphasizes the collegial character of the episcopacy. For example, in the examination of the candidate the principal consecrator asks whether the bishop-elect is "resolved to build up the Church as the Body of Christ and to remain united to it with the order of bishops under the authority of the successor of the apostle Peter." Both the prayer inserted in Eucharistic Prayer I and the solemn blessing mention the "order of bishops" to which the newly consecrated bishop is raised by virtue of his consecration. The suggested homily asks the assembly to "gladly and gratefully, therefore, receive our brother whom we are about to accept into the college of bishops by the laying on of hands." Within this homily the bishop-elect is also admonished to "never forget that in the Catholic Church, made one by the bond of Christian love, you are incorporated into the college of bishops. You should therefore have a constant concern for all the churches and gladly come to the aid and support of churches in need." Furthermore, the rite itself includes a collegial act, the laying on of hands by the consecrating bishops. The rite of ordination thus clearly indicates the collegial character of episcopal consecration, since the bishop-elect is not merely consecrated a bishop but enters into the order of bishops,¹⁸ and thereby is a member of the college of bishops.

This emphasis on episcopal collegiality is not the result of revised rites or the Second Vatican Council. Ten years before the council Bernard Botte studied the prayers of ordination and concluded that the priesthood and the episcopate were essentially collegial.¹⁹ He found that elevation

¹⁷ David Power notes that "the history of the ordination rite, beginning with the *Apostolic Tradition*, indicates that it was increasingly the eucharistic ministry of the ordained that was highlighted in the ritual" ("The Basis for Official Ministry in the Church," in *Official Ministry* [n. 14 above] 78). Karl Rahner argues against absolute ordination, but from the perspective that all episcopal ordination, including that of titular bishops, is relative to an office whether or not it is relative to a territory. The present essay agrees with his position that episcopal ordination confers membership in the episcopal college, but would argue that the episcopacy is indissociable from a Eucharistic community, however this is conceived (*Bishops: Their Status and Function* [Baltimore: Helicon, 1963] 27-34).

¹⁸ A bishop is ordained to the order of bishops (plural) rather than to the order of bishop (singular). The language indicates that he enters into a network of relationships rather than is elevated to a power in and of himself.

¹⁹ See Bernard Botte, "Collegial Character of the Priesthood and the Episcopate," *Concilium* 4 (New York: Paulist, 1965) 177-83; "L'Ordre d'après les prières d'ordination," in *Etudes sur le sacrement de l'ordre*, ed. J. Guyot (Paris: Cerf, 1957) 13-25; "Caractère

to holy orders seemed to be less the transmission of sacred or juridical powers from person to person than the conferring of a gift of the Spirit with a view to the growth of the Church as the Body of Christ. He concluded that the local church could not be self-sufficient and that the Church is not composed of local communities existing alongside each other. It is the college of bishops which orders the Church, since the bishops constitute an "order."

SACRAMENTAL EPISCOPAL CONSECRATION IN VATICAN II

In *Lumen gentium* the effect of the sacrament is twofold: the gift of the Holy Spirit and the sacramental character which enables the bishop to represent Christ according to the threefold office of sanctifying, teaching, and governing. This last represents a significant advancement in the theology of orders by the council, whereby the three offices are conferred by sacramental consecration itself rather than being the result of a *missio canonica* from the pope. The limitation mentioned in the document is that the offices of teaching and governing "of their very nature can only be exercised in hierarchical communion with the head and members of the college" (LG 21). A bishop is "constituted member of the episcopal body by virtue of the sacramental consecration and by the hierarchical communion with the head and members of the college" (LG 22). Thus it is of the very nature of the episcopacy that a bishop exercises his office, even within his own particular church, only in relationship to the permanent body of bishops into which he is "incorporated" by his sacramental consecration.

Membership in and union with the college of bishops is consequently an essential element within episcopal consecration, and arguably represents the "fulness of orders" which sets the episcopacy apart from the other orders.²⁰ What is sacramentally signified in episcopal consecration is the collegial nature of the Church as a "communion of communions." Thus I agree with Bernard Cooke that "the word 'fulness' can be truly used to describe the sacramental power of the episcopate, because it is the collegial dimension of the bishops' witness," although I disagree that it is primarily the faith of the entire Church that is the particular object of this witness.²¹ What the college of bishops symbolizes is rather the

collégial du presbytérat et de l'épiscopat," *ibid.* 97-124. Also J. Lécuyer, *Etudes sur la collégialité épiscopale* (Le Puy: X. Mappus, 1964) 57-79.

²⁰ Within the Greek Orthodox tradition, John D. Zizioulas comments that "because of the relational nature of ordination, no ordained person realizes his *ordo* in himself but in the community. Thus if he is isolated from the community he ceases to be an ordained person (no anathematized or excommunicated minister can be regarded as a minister)" (*Being as Communion* [Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary, 1985] 233-34).

²¹ Cooke, "Fullness of Orders" 164.

unity that exists among the altar communities which each bishop represents in his office. Thus the "order" of the episcopacy truly reflects the ordering among Eucharistic communities. The theological foundation for this position lies in a theology of the Eucharist and its interconnection with an ecclesiology of the Church as the Body of Christ.

EPISCOPACY AND EUCHARIST

As David Power notes, "Safeguarding the unity of the Church in the one apostolic tradition, presiding over its essential unity, and presiding over its Eucharist all go together."²² The episcopal witness to the unity of particular churches within the episcopal college, as well as the task of being the "visible source and foundation of unity"²³ in his own particular church, is inseparable from a bishop's Eucharistic presidency. The liturgical role of the bishop is the sacramentalization of his governing role, the "liturgical dimension of a pastoral charge."²⁴ The presidency of the bishop over the body of Christ in the Eucharist parallels his governance of the ecclesial Body of Christ. Thus the task of witnessing to unity in the Church is inseparable from the Eucharist, the sacrament of unity.

This is not surprising, given the identification between the Eucharist and the Church in the epistles of St. Paul. Paul's identification of the Church as the Body of Christ is well known (Rom 12:4 ff.; 1 Cor 12:12 ff.; Eph 1:23, 4:12 ff., 5:36; Col 1:18-24). John Zizioulas observes that this image of the Church cannot be understood outside of the Eucharistic experience of the apostolic Church.²⁵ He notes that the terms "Eucharist" and "church" become interchangeable, as, e.g., when Paul refers to a Eucharistic assembly as a church in 1 Cor 11:18: "I hear that when you meet as a church there are divisions among you." Likewise, in v. 22, showing contempt for the Eucharistic meaning of the gathering is the same as showing contempt for the Church of God. Zizioulas concludes that in the New Testament the Eucharist appears as the manifestation of the Church itself.

The Body of Christ, the ecclesial body, and the Eucharistic body become interchangeable in the text. For example, "discerning the body" (1 Cor 11:29) refers to the recognition of the organic unity of the ecclesial

²² Power, "Basis for Official Ministry" 66. On p. 78 Power explains that the roles of bishop, presbyter, and deacon in the Eucharist represent "the primary sacramentalization of their role in the community." See also H. M. Legrand, "The Presidency of the Eucharist according to the Ancient Tradition," *Worship* 53 (1979) 407.

²³ *Lumen gentium* 23.

²⁴ Legrand, "Presidency of the Eucharist" 413-38.

²⁵ Jean Zizioulas, *L'Eucharistie* (Paris: Mame, 1970) esp. 35-51.

body which should exist.²⁶ In other words, the Corinthians should attend to the quality of relationships within the ecclesial body before partaking of the Eucharistic body identified with the Body of the Lord in v. 24.

Henri de Lubac has shown that in Christian antiquity any kind of distinction between the Eucharist and the Church was unthinkable. For Augustine as well as for the Latin writers of the seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries, "the Eucharist is related to the Church as cause to effect, as means to an end, as a sign to the reality which it signifies."²⁷ In these early centuries it was the Eucharist that was seen as the "mystical" or sacramental body of Christ, and the Church was the "real" Body of Christ. Largely as a result of the controversy with Berengar of Tours concerning the Real Presence in the second half of the eleventh century, the Eucharist began to be called *corpus verum*, and the Church assumed the title *corpus mysticum* in contrast to the earlier usage.²⁸ This weakened the idea of the Church as the Body of Christ and separated the theology of the Church from its Christological and sacramental context. As a result, ecclesiology became divorced from a theology of the Eucharist and the Eucharist lost its identity as a sacramental sign of the Church.

ORDER AND RELATION WITHIN THE BODY

It is within the nexus of the Eucharist, the Body of Christ, and the Church that the sacrament of order finds meaning and signification. The discussion of the Eucharistic assembly in 1 Cor 10 is immediately followed by a discussion of the unity and variety of the spiritual gifts with reference to the one Body of Christ and its many members. The various gifts are ordered within the ecclesial body as described in 1 Cor 11:28–31. Zizioulas argues that since a body does not exist prior to the existence of the various members that are ordered within it, so too the ecclesial community does not exist prior to assignment to a particular *ordo* in community, but that very ordination to the community is constitutive of the community.²⁹ The Body only exists in terms of ministry, the *charismata*.³⁰

²⁶ Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *1 Corinthians* (Wilmington, Del.: Michael Glazier, 1979) 114.

²⁷ Henri de Lubac, *Corpus mysticum* (Paris: Aubier-Montaigne, 1944) 24.

²⁸ *Ibid.* 39–46.

²⁹ Zizioulas, *Being as Communion* 216. It is important to note that Zizioulas considers baptism and confirmation to be ordinations inseparably linked with the Eucharist. See also "Some Reflections on Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist," *Sobornost* 5 (1969) 644–52. Yves Congar also argues that ministry should not be divorced from charismatic gifts and function within a community: "Ministères et structuration de l'église," *Ministères et communion ecclésiale* (Paris: Cerf, 1971) 31–49.

³⁰ *Being as Communion* 212. J.-M.-R. Tillard also interprets the order of the Eucharistic community according to the charisms of the Spirit and sees the function of the ordained minister as inseparable from his place within the community: *Eglise d'églises: L'Ecclésiologie*

One important conclusion Zizioulas draws from this is that ordination is fundamentally relational in character rather than functional or ontological. He thus tries to avoid two traditional approaches to ministry. In the first approach, ministerial *potestas* or grace is transmitted through the ordaining minister as an individual as part of the linear historical line of apostolic succession. The ordained minister, having received power and authority, transmits them in turn to another. Zizioulas modifies this view by noting that a bishop succeeds the apostles not as an individual but as head of his community. In the second approach, a community delegates authority to the ordained person.³¹ Both approaches operate within a notion of causality rather than within a network of relationships.

Zizioulas proposes an alternative view of ordination, including the ordinations of baptism and confirmation, whereby the community is understood as “the existential ‘locus’ of the convergence of the charismata (1 Cor 12).” Ordination “creates” the community in the sense that the unity of the body exists only by virtue of the diversity within it.³² The community does not exist apart from or prior to the order it receives from the charismata of its members.

It is essential not to misunderstand Zizioulas’ remarks, lest they be interpreted as supporting an oppressive authoritarianism. He does not say that the Church is created or constituted by presbyterate or the episcopacy, but by ordination—the reception of the various charismata, of which the sacrament of order is one example. Thus he does not equate the Church with the clerical hierarchy. Furthermore, the highest charism in 1 Cor 13 is love, and the ecclesial body is inseparable from the Eucharistic body, a body offered for the other. Finally, his whole effort is an attempt to avoid identifying ordination with *potestas* and to envision it instead as relational, which is to say as personal and interpersonal. The paradigm is nothing less than the hierarchy and the interrelationships within the Trinity.

Within the Eucharist the bishop is not only presider of the Eucharistic ritual, but also the focus of the unity of the Eucharistic community.³³ This is the bishop’s “place” or *ordo* in the community. By virtue of his ordination he is related so profoundly to the community that he can no

de communion (Paris: Cerf, 1987) 220 ff. So also Edward Schillebeeckx, *Ministry* (London: SCM, 1981) 70.

³¹ *Being in Communion* 215. Zizioulas comments that contemporary biblical studies which stress the absence of “bishop” in the NT have inevitably pushed theology towards the second option.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ Tillard argues that the bishop presides over the Eucharist precisely because he is the person charged with ecclesial communion. Thus his liturgical role evolves from his ecclesial role (*Eglise d’églises* 238).

longer, as ordained, be considered as an individual unto himself or as "possessing" any particular power as an individual.³⁴ The ordained person is consequently not "raised" to a superior ontological level of being, nor does he merely function in the service of the community.

REPRESENTATIVE FUNCTION OF THE BISHOP

The bishop's "place" in the community is a representative one. As the leader of the ecclesial community responsible for its unity, the bishop presides over the Eucharist and represents Christ, speaking the consecratory words on behalf of Christ, who offers himself for his Church. The bishop also represents the Church, offering sacrifice in the name of all. This sacrifice is inseparable from the sacrifice of Christ, because the Church is none other than the Body of Christ. Herein lies the necessary link between the episcopacy's representation of Christ and its representation of the Church as the Body of Christ. The pneumatology of the charismata ordaining and thus constituting the community as the Body of Christ in the Eucharist prevents this identification between the Church and the Body of Christ from degenerating into a type of Christomonism that arrogantly appropriates to the Church what is uniquely Christ's.³⁵ The Church is consequently not a continuation of the Incarnation in a literal sense.

This representative function of the bishop with reference to a local Eucharistic community does not significantly differ from that of a priest's, with the exception that a bishop is a symbol of unity in his own particular church by presiding over a number of Eucharistic assemblies. Historically presbyters assumed the title "priest" when they assumed leadership of the Eucharist. Consequently it may at first appear that Zizioulas' insight into the relational character of orders differs little from the traditional view that orders signifies a configuration to Christ, and we still would not have determined the ecclesial content of what is signified in episcopal ordination. The major difference between the two orders consists in the fact that the bishop, in addition to his representative function within the local Eucharistic community, represents that community in the college of bishops. We must therefore show the connection between the relational *ordo* of a bishop in his particular church and his *ordo* in the college of bishops.

Just as the *ordo* of the bishop is defined in terms of his relationship with the Eucharistic community, so also will his *ordo* within the college

³⁴ Ibid. 226-27.

³⁵ I have discussed problems inherent in too closely identifying the Church with Christ in *The Church as the Social Embodiment of Grace in the Ecclesiology of Henri de Lubac* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1986) 105-6, 144-58.

of bishops have a Eucharistic basis. Since the ecclesial body is constituted according to the charismata, with the result that no member of the body has an existence apart from or independently of other members of the body, so neither does an individual Eucharistic community exist independently of the other Eucharistic communities. The relationship between the episcopacy and an individual bishop is analogous to that between the universal and the particular church, both relationships reflecting the unitary character of the Eucharist despite its manifold celebrations.³⁶

The episcopacy is one, the Church is one, and the Eucharist is one, although each subsists in multiple, concrete embodiments. Since the source of this unity is the Eucharist, the structure of the Church derives from its worship, and the episcopacy is the visible manifestation of that structure. The episcopacy, for example, is embodied in each bishop, since the unity of the college of bishops objectively precedes the individual bishop.³⁷ The college is not the sum of the individual bishops, and the unity of the college does not depend on the moral unity of its individual members, much less on their assembly in the same geographical area. We can say, then, that when a bishop teaches the same creed proclaimed throughout the universal Church, that teaching is a collegial act.

In a similar manner, the universal Church is not the sum total of the particular churches, and a particular church is not a division of the universal Church. The universal Church subsists in each particular church as the body of Christ is present, whole and undivided, in each Eucharistic celebration. The structure of the Church is consequently a union of communions in which the whole exists in each individual part, and each part exists not in isolation from or parallel to the other parts but in communion with them.

This communion of communions is sacramentalized in the college of bishops. Each bishop is the sacramental sign of the bond between the particular churches, for not only does the bishop function as mediator between Christ and the particular church, but the college of bishops functions as the visible bond between the particular churches. This is reflected in *Lumen gentium's* statement:

The individual bishops are the visible source and foundation of unity in their own particular churches, which are constituted after the model of the universal Church; it is in these and formed out of them that the one and unique Catholic Church exists. And for that reason precisely each bishop represents his own

³⁶ For the Eucharistic foundation of episcopal collegiality, see Susan Wood, "The Theological Foundation of Episcopal Conferences and Collegiality," *Studia canonica* 22 (1988) 327-38.

³⁷ Rahner, "Hierarchical Structure of the Church" 198.

church, whereas all, together with the pope, represent the whole Church in a bond of peace, love and unity.³⁸

Thus the "fulness of orders" within episcopal consecration represents membership in the episcopal college, the result of episcopal consecration and hierarchical union with the other bishops and the bishop of Rome. This union within the Church is the ecclesial reality manifested in the episcopal sacrament of order.

Karl Rahner attributes the power of the bishop as an individual, his threefold office of sanctifying, teaching, and governing, to his membership within the college of bishops.³⁹ The power of a bishop, then, derives from the authority and power of the college. The authority of the college does not equal the sum of the authorities of the individual members, since the episcopacy is not the sum of individual bishops. Furthermore, since the college is constituted by sacramental episcopal consecration, this is a sacramental, rather than a juridical, basis of authority. From this we can see that for two reasons the sacrament of order is fundamentally relational rather than a conferral of power on the recipient apart from his *ordo* within the community: (1) orders, when accompanied by union with the bishops and head of the college, confers membership in the college; and (2) a bishop loses his authority to teach and govern if he breaks union with the college and its head.

There are two inadequately differentiated sources of supreme authority in the Church: the college of bishops in union with their head, the Roman pontiff, and the Roman pontiff by reason of his office as the vicar of Christ.⁴⁰ It remains an open question theologically whether the bishop of Rome, when speaking officially in his own name, does not speak as the head of the college, and therefore speaks at least in an implicitly collegial manner.⁴¹ This is especially true if the bishop of Rome, as the focus of unity for the universal Church, is envisioned as functioning representatively much like a corporate personality.⁴² The nature of the ecclesial community is concentrated within the ecclesial leader in such a way that the community recognizes itself in that person. Since this function is as true of a bishop with respect to a particular church as, at another level,

³⁸ *Lumen gentium* 23 (Austin Flannery translation, Collegeville: Liturgical, 1975).

³⁹ Rahner, "Hierarchical Structure of the Church" 198; "Aspects of the Episcopal Office," in *Theological Investigations* 14 (New York: Seabury, 1976) 191-92; and "On the Divine Right of the Episcopate," in *Episcopate and Primacy* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1962) 75-135.

⁴⁰ *Lumen gentium* 22.

⁴¹ Rahner, "Divine Right of Episcopate" 102.

⁴² Tillard, *Eglise d'églises* 243-51; Zizioulas, *Being as Communion* 230.

of the bishop of Rome with respect to the universal Church, the particular church is a microcosm of the universal Church.

PROBLEM OF RECOGNITION OF ORDERS

The relational view of ordained ministry as presented here poses new problems regarding the recognition of orders (1) of an individual bishop who breaks unity with the college of bishops, and (2) for those churches, such as the separated churches in the East, which are not in full union with the Roman Catholic Church but which the Church recognizes as possessing valid orders. If sacramental consecration to the episcopacy confers membership in the episcopal college on those bishops in union with each other and the bishop of Rome, and if their authority to teach, sanctify, and govern derives from their membership in the college, then it would appear that a person would remain a bishop in the full and proper sense only as long as that person maintains communion with the head and members of the college.⁴³

Unitatis redintegratio describes ecclesial communities as being either in "imperfect" or "full" communion with the Catholic Church. This allows for different degrees of communion and provides more flexibility than do categories of membership. Since the theology of the episcopacy presented here is integral to an ecclesiology of communion, it may be more appropriate to speak of "communion" with the college of bishops rather than "membership" in the college. *Lumen gentium* actually uses both expressions: "One is constituted a *member* of the episcopal body in virtue of the sacramental consecration and by hierarchical *communion* with the head and members of the college" (22). Just as there are varying degrees of communion between ecclesial communities, there are varying degrees of communion between bishops. Since the bishop functions as the representative of the ecclesial community, one would expect these two relationships to be parallel.

Recent discussions of the ecumenical recognition of ministry point out that recognition of ecclesial communities leads to the recognition of ministry rather than the other way around. Zizioulas, for example, calls validity a juridical term that implies that ministry can be isolated from the rest of ecclesiology and can be judged in itself according to objective criteria.⁴⁴ He argues that the ecclesial reality of a given community, rather than isolated and objectified norms, is what validates a certain

⁴³ This is also the deduction of Seamus Ryan in "Episcopal Consecration: Trent to Vatican II," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 33 (1966) 134. Related to this see C. Vogel, "*Laica communione contentus: Le retour du presbytre au rang des laïcs*," *Revue des sciences religieuses* 47 (1973) 56-122.

⁴⁴ Zizioulas, *Being as Communion* 243.

ministry. Therefore a recognition of communities, of their beliefs and sacramental practice, leads to a recognition of their ministry. This, of course, entails a reinterpretation whereby the community rather than the minister is in apostolic succession.

A critical evaluation of this interpretation or any detailed examination of apostolic succession lies beyond the scope of the present inquiry, limited as it is to an exploration of the sacramentality of episcopal consecration. A theology of the episcopal college, however, suggests an alternative possibility, that of the bishops as a college succeeding to the apostolic college.⁴⁵ Recognition of communion in the college would constitute recognition of apostolic succession. In this instance apostolic succession remains personal but avoids an overly physical and linear-historical interpretation of succession. The college, as the mediating bond between the particular churches and the larger communion of these churches, represents both the apostolic succession of local communities and the succession of the individual bishops insofar as they are in communion with the college.

INTERPRETATIONS OF "PLENITUDE"

This essay has borrowed from a Eucharistic ecclesiology developed from an Orthodox perspective. Zizioulas' suggestion that ordained ministry is fundamentally relational rather than ontological or functional has enabled us to examine the ecclesial dimension of episcopal consecration from the perspective of the charismata which constitute the ecclesial body. The present question is how this Eastern perspective articulates with the ecclesiology of *Lumen gentium*.

Zizioulas interprets the local church as the plenitude and as representative of the catholicity or fulness of the Church because of its identification with the Eucharist.⁴⁶ This results in a stronger emphasis in Orthodox ecclesiology on the autonomy of the local church, the inclusiveness of Eucharistic assemblies, and an appreciation for the eschatological character of both the Eucharist and the local church. This view of the local church, however, is balanced by the acknowledgment that "no local Church could be a Church unless it was open to communion with the rest of the Churches."⁴⁷

The Western Church, on the other hand, with its greater emphasis on the universal Church, stresses the interrelationship between the local churches as objectified in the college of bishops and the college's focus

⁴⁵ This is Karl Rahner's position in "On the Divine Right of the Episcopate" 75, 83-108.

⁴⁶ *Being as Communion* 143-69; also "Episkopê et episkopos dans l'église primitive: Bref inventaire de la documentation," *Irénikon* 56 (1983) 484-502.

⁴⁷ *Being as Communion* 241.

of unity in the bishop of Rome. This view of the Church is in turn balanced by *Lumen gentium*'s statement that the one and unique Catholic Church exists in and is formed out of the particular churches (23). Yet this same statement reflects the Western emphasis by stating that the particular churches "are constituted after the model of the universal Church" rather than vice versa. "Plenitude," according to the Western view, stresses the bondedness of the particular churches. This is reflected in the "fulness of the sacrament of order," which, according to the thesis of this essay, sacramentalizes and makes visible that communion of communions which is the Church.

Even though Eastern and Western ecclesiologies differ with respect to the relationship between the local and universal Church, the differences do not seem to be irreconcilable. Yves Congar has shown that a Eucharistic ecclesiology cannot be constructed against a universalist one.⁴⁸ The local church is the basic unit of a communion-of-communions model of the Church. The fulness of the universal Church resides there but does not exist apart from the communion of churches. As a member of the college of bishops entrusted with the care of the whole Church, the individual bishop has a responsibility towards the whole Church, especially in the work of evangelization.⁴⁹ The relationship between particular church and universal Church thus reflects the relationship between the one and the many that is also that of the unity and diversity within the Trinity and the unity of the Eucharist in its manifold celebrations.

CONCLUSIONS

1. It is of the essence of the sacrament of order to create a relational bond between a bishop and a particular Eucharistic community, as well as one between a bishop and the other bishops, including the bishop of Rome. What is signified in the sacrament of order is these relationships which both constitute and manifest the order of the Church as a communion of communions. The bishops are the visible source and foundation of unity in their own particular churches, and as a college they visibly represent the unity among the particular churches. Thus they not only sacramentalize this unity in their person and relationships, but their first pastoral concern is to preserve and promote that unity both in their own particular church and within the communion of churches. The "fulness" represented in the episcopacy is none other than this communion within the episcopal college.

⁴⁸ Yves Congar, "La consécration épiscopale et la succession apostolique: Constituent-elles chef d'une église locale ou membre du collège?" in *Ministères et communion ecclésiale* 123-40.

⁴⁹ *Lumen gentium* 23.

2. This ecclesial signification of the sacrament of order is inseparable from the more traditional view of orders as signifying configuration to Christ, with the difference that this configuration does not occur within an ordained minister in isolation from that minister's *ordo* within an ecclesial community. The primary configuration to Christ is that of the ecclesial community according to the ordering of the charismata and the participation of that community in the body and blood of Christ. The ordained minister is configured to Christ as the head and representative figure of that community. In other words, the minister is configured both to Christ and to the community, the ecclesial body of Christ.

3. Although a study of the presbyterate is beyond the scope of the present essay, our understanding of this sacrament needs to be realigned according to our understanding of the episcopacy, since the presbyterate is a participation in the episcopacy. The need to retrieve its collegial nature, however, is apparent. Since the particular church is a microcosm of the universal Church, the presbyterate will function somewhat analogously to the college of bishops. However, one theological distinction is the difference in the relationship of presbyters to their bishop from the relationship of the bishops to the bishop of Rome. The bishop of Rome does not possess sacramental ordination beyond that of bishop and is himself a member of the episcopal college. A bishop's ordination, however, does signify an ecclesial reality beyond that signified in presbyteral ordination.

4. If one understands the Church as ordered according to the charismata in 1 Cor 12, Gal 3:28 cannot be interpreted to mean that there is no differentiation within the charismata of the ecclesial body. The Church is indeed the people of God, but a charismatic people. Since office within the Church is itself a charism, it would be false to dichotomize the leadership in the Church and its charismatic elements.⁵⁰ Eucharistic presidency will remain an *ordo* within the Church, since it is related to the role of leadership and the responsibility for maintaining communion within the body.

5. The distinction between the priesthood of the laity and the ordained minister does not lie in the fact that one is more configured to Christ than the other, but in their role in relation to the community. The ordained minister, charged with preserving the unity of the ecclesial body, represents it and speaks on its behalf in the name of Christ. Even though this means that the priesthood of the faithful is not the basis for Eucharistic presidency, this does not preclude the fact that the entire

⁵⁰ Karl Rahner, *The Dynamic Element in the Church* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1964) 13-83. See also Carolyn Osiek, "Relation of Charism to Rights and Duties in the New Testament Church," in *Official Ministry in a New Age* 41-59.

assembly celebrates and offers the liturgy. The ordained minister as representative of the assembly does not function apart from it, but unifies, sums up, and represents both the assembly and its offering. Thus the function of the ordained minister in relation to the worshipping assembly is analogous to that person's function in relationship to the sacrifice of Christ. Both assembly and Christ are "represented" rather than "offered in the place of" or "repeated."

6. The episcopacy is not strictly monarchical in the sense that a bishop functions independently of the college of bishops or in isolation from his college of presbyters. While it is true that episcopal consecration confers a fulness of sacramental power in the bishop's role of teaching and ruling, it can by its very nature be exercised "only in hierarchical communion with the head and members of the college."⁵¹ The supreme exercise of this power is collegial within an ecumenical council.

7. According to the relational and representational view of the episcopacy presented here, the practice of ordaining titular bishops needs re-examination, since it is of the essence of the episcopacy to preside over a church.⁵² Bishops exercise authority precisely as heads of Eucharistic communities.

⁵¹ *Lumen gentium* 21.

⁵² Karl Rahner argues to the contrary in *Bishops: Their Status and Function* 27-34. His position seems to be limited by an overly territorial identification of particular churches, as well as by the idea that bishops can be ordained for leadership in the universal Church without having direct responsibility for a particular church. This creates a tension between a view of the Church conceived as a "communion of communions," wherein the universal Church is present in each particular church, and a monolithic view of the Church as having an existence over and apart from particular churches.